



# ADS CENTER

Resource Center to Address  
Discrimination and Stigma

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN WHERE WE ARE AND WHERE WE NEED TO BE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
AND HUMAN SERVICES  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration  
Center for Mental Health Services

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## Free Training Teleconference

## Overcoming Barriers and the Stigma Associated With Mental Illness In Rural Communities

### Please Join Us

The SAMHSA Resource Center to Address Discrimination and Stigma Associated With Mental Illness invites you to participate in a free teleconference training titled, "**Overcoming Barriers and the Stigma Associated With Mental Illness In Rural Communities.**"

**Date: Wednesday, June 28, 2006**  
**Time: 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM (Eastern Time)**

To participate in this training teleconference, please complete the online registration form located at <http://www.stopstigma.samhsa.gov/regpage.cfm>. For additional teleconference information, please refer to the [Training](#) section of the SAMHSA ADS Center web site or contact a technical assistance representative by e-mail at [stopstigma@samhsa.hhs.gov](mailto:stopstigma@samhsa.hhs.gov) or by telephone at 1-800-540-0320. Please pass this invitation along to interested friends and colleagues. *Please note: Registration for this teleconference will close at 5:00 p.m., Eastern time, on Tuesday, June 27, 2006.*

### Training Sponsor

This teleconference is sponsored by the SAMHSA Resource Center to Address Discrimination and Stigma (ADS Center), a project of the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS) of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The session is free to all participants.

### Training Summary

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, the 60 million residents of rural areas in the United States experience a rate of mental illness equal to or greater than that of their urban and suburban counterparts. While this statistic seems to indicate a need for equal or greater access to mental health information in these communities, several barriers exist to prevent rural residents from gaining a better knowledge of mental illnesses and corresponding treatments. One of these barriers, the stigma and discrimination associated with mental illness, manifests itself in the form of negative

stereotyping that equates mental health problems and the need for treatment with personal or spiritual failing and a fear of rejection by family and friends.

The effects of stigma and discrimination in rural communities often are magnified by other characteristics of life in the country. For instance, geographic isolation frequently limits opportunities for mental health education and exposure to mental health services, high rates of poverty and scarcity of resources often result in a lack of appropriate services and qualified mental health providers, and close scrutiny by neighbors and the possibility for dual relationships outside the clinic between service providers and consumers raise serious questions about maintaining confidentiality of care in rural communities. Given the unique combination of factors contributing to the prevalence of stigmatizing behavior and discrimination in rural communities, what exactly do we know about rural stigma and what is being done to counter negative attitudes about people with mental illnesses in order to set the record straight in rural America?

Please join the SAMHSA ADS Center on **Wednesday, June 28, 2006**, as we bring together a national audience of mental health consumers, advocates, providers, researchers, friends and family to discuss and explore the topic of stigma in the rural communities of the United States. In addition to offering an overview of the problems and concerns related to stigma and discrimination in rural America, our guest speakers will outline models and programs currently being used to address stigmatizing attitudes and discriminating behavior in select rural communities across the Nation. We also will learn about one woman's experience of rural stigma and how she managed to overcome negativity.

## ***Training Goals***

- Discuss the unique factors in rural communities that may contribute to stigma associated with mental illness.
- Describe efforts to address stigma and discrimination of people with mental illnesses in rural communities.
- Share effective models or approaches to address these issues.
- Identify ways to tap into the strengths of rural families and institution.

## ***Event Speakers***

### **Shela Silverman, M.S.W.**

Ms. Silverman is a consumer advocate living and working in northern New Mexico, where she loves the people and the quality of life she leads after living for many years on the hectic east coast. In her current position with CONTAC, one of three national consumer technical assistance centers funded by SAMHSA, she initiates programs and projects throughout the western United States and provides technical assistance to numerous consumers and consumer organizations. In addition to partnering on several research projects with Michael Blank at the Rural Mental Health Research Center at the University of Virginia, Ms. Silverman has authored two journal articles and two book chapters on subjects related to consumer programs. At present, she is preparing an article that addresses the abandoned and neglected patient cemeteries located at the New Mexico Behavioral Health Institute in Las Vegas, New Mexico. Ms. Silverman holds a Bachelor's degree in Anthropology and a Master's degree in Social Work. She earned both degrees as a nontraditional student at the same time her five adult children also were attending universities.

**Dennis Mohatt, M.A.**

Mr. Mohatt holds a Master of Arts degree and is an expert in rural health with a concentration on mental health issues. Currently, he is the senior program director for Mental Health Programs at the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) in Boulder, CO. The WICHE Mental Health Program was established in 1955 by the Western Regional Council of State Governments. It is governed by the Mental Health Oversight Council (MHOC), composed of the State mental health directors from the 15 WICHE States. The purpose of the WICHE Center for Rural Mental Health Research is to develop and evaluate implementation strategies, using a five-step process, to promote evidence-based practice (EBP) for persons with depression and other serious mental illness. Previously, Mr. Mohatt has held positions as the director of the Nebraska Medicaid; chief executive officer of the Child Guidance Center in Lincoln, Nebraska; and chief operating officer for Northpoint Behavioral Healthcare Systems in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

**Gilberto Pérez, Jr., M.S.W.**

Mr. Pérez, has worked at Northeastern Center, Inc., a community mental health center in Ligonier, Indiana, for four years as a bilingual therapist and team leader of the Ligonier Outpatient Clinic. Currently, he serves as the Director of the Bienvenido Program, a mental health prevention program that seeks to decrease the feelings of stigma and increase access to mental health services for Latino immigrants in rural Northeast Indiana. Since authoring the Bienvenido curriculum, Mr. Pérez has tripled the number of program participants coming to use these services from schools and community-based settings. Originally from South Texas, Mr. Pérez has undertaken most of his work in rural Kansas and the central rural region of Puerto Rico. He holds a Master of Social Work degree from the Universidad Interamericana in San Juan, Puerto Rico; as well as, a Bachelor's degree in social work and a graduate certificate in conflict transformation from Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Virginia. Mr. Pérez serves on the NASW Specialty Practice Section, Child, Adolescent, and Young Adult Committee. Also, he serves as a member of the Transformation Working Group with the Division of Mental Health and Addiction in Indiana.

***Presentations***

Speaker presentations will take approximately 60 minutes and will be followed by a 30-minute question-and-answer period. Participants will receive confirmation of their registration by e-mail shortly before the scheduled conference date. This confirmation message will include telephone dial-in instructions and a link to presentation materials posted in the [Training](#) section of the SAMHSA ADS Center Web site.

*The SAMHSA ADS Center is a program of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services.*

***About the  
SAMHSA ADS Center***

SAMHSA's Resource Center to Address Discrimination and Stigma (ADS Center) helps people design, implement and operate programs that reduce discrimination and stigma associated with mental illnesses. With the most up-to-date research and information, the ADS Center helps individuals, organizations and governments counter such discrimination and stigma in the community, in the workplace, and in the media.

Subscribe to receive this update by sending an e-mail to [stopstigma@samhsa.hhs.gov](mailto:stopstigma@samhsa.hhs.gov), or by calling an ADS Center representative at 800-540-0320. To comment on the materials included in this update, please send e-mail to [stopstigma@samhsa.hhs.gov](mailto:stopstigma@samhsa.hhs.gov), or write a letter to Resource Center to Address Discrimination and Stigma Associated with Mental Illness; Informational Updates; 11420 Rockville Pike; Rockville, MD 20852. To unsubscribe from this distribution list using the subscribed e-mail account, click [here](#). To unsubscribe your address from a different e-mail account, send a message to [Majordomo@listserve.shs.net](mailto:Majordomo@listserve.shs.net) with the following command in the message body: unsubscribe stopstigma

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